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Senate

The Senate met at 9 a.m., and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

O God, our help in ages past, help us to be open to Your serendipities today. Grant that we may not allow our experience of You in the past to make us think that You are predictable or limited in what You can do today. Help us not to become so comfortable with the familiar that we miss the new things that You want to do in and through us and in our Nation.

Father, our life is so often filled with stress and pressure. We need Your help in keeping our hearts receptive to Your Word in the midst of all of the other words that clamor for our attention. May our constant question be: "Is there any word from the Lord?"

Help us to have no other gods before You—neither our power, popularity, nor plans. Grant that we may value spiritual riches over material and give You first place in our hearts. With these priorities, bless us in our work today. In our Lord's name. Amen.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The able Senator from Rhode Island is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, today there will be a period for morning business until the hour of 10 a.m. Immediately following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 1664, the immigration bill, and the pending Graham amendment. Additional amendments are expected to be offered during today's session. There-

fore, Senators can expect rollcall votes throughout the day, possibly prior to 12:30. A cloture motion was filed to the immigration bill last night, and in accordance with rule XXII, Senators have until 12:30 today to file first-degree amendments to the bill. The Senate will recess between the hours of 12:30 and 2:15 for the weekly policy conferences to meet.

I thank the Chair.

I yield the floor.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business, not to extend beyond the hour of 10 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for not to exceed 5 minutes each.

Mr. BREAUX addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The able Senator from Louisiana is recognized.

Mr. BREAUX. I thank the Chair. I will yield myself 5 minutes under that unanimous consent.

THE CENTRIST COALITION PROPOSAL

Mr. BREAUX. Mr. President, for colleagues who may be watching by their TV monitors, Senator CHAFEE and I have taken this time this morning to talk, once again, about the so-called Chafee-Breaux centrist coalition proposal, which I think is monumental legislation in that it presents to the Senate a way to achieve a balanced budget in a 7-year period and do so in a bipartisan fashion.

A lot of people have said that something of this nature cannot be accomplished in an election year. Our operations and the legislation that we offer proves that it can be done. We have met since October 1995, last year, on a

regular basis, sitting down and discussing the difficult problems that are facing this Congress. It is very clear that the alternative of doing nothing is not a real alternative.

Unless we get a handle on entitlement spending, and unless we make major changes in the entitlement programs, our country is going to be in very, very serious trouble. The alternative, I think, is a bright future for this country and for our children. With a balanced budget, people see a number of benefits that are real, that are tangible, that affect their daily lives—lower interest rates on home mortgages, lower interest rates on car notes, more spendable money to spend at home on the things that families need in terms of education and health care.

We have presented a package for our colleagues to consider, and we hope that after reading our plan, they will join with us in a true bipartisan fashion and move on and enact a balanced budget in this Congress. It is not too late. It is only too late if we do nothing. It is absolutely critical that we take this step in this Congress.

I point out that here we talked about how close we are in the various proposals. There is much similarity in the administration's latest proposal and the proposal from the Republicans and the proposal from our centrist coalition, the Chafee-Breaux proposal. There is no reason that, with all of these things that we have already agreed on, we cannot take the next step and work out the differences that still exist.

All three proposals have a balanced budget using CBO numbers. We save between \$600 and \$700 billion over the life of this plan, and we do it while protecting the needs of the most vulnerable in our country—the people on Medicaid, Medicare, and welfare. So it is not to say that you cannot save between \$600 and \$700 billion and not at the same

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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